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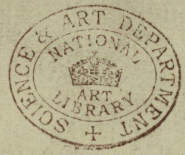
Crystal Palace.

Handel Festival.

Programme of Arrangements

June, 1868.

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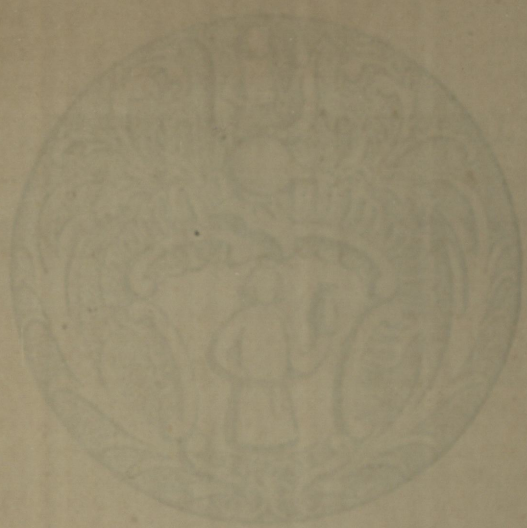
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George Peck  
Born in ...  
Died in ...

AMERICAN ANTIQUARIAN SOCIETY  
55 NORTH CORNHILL, BOSTON, MASS.



GEORGE FREDERIC HANDEL  
BORN Y 23 FEBRUARY 1684  
DIED Y 14<sup>th</sup> OF APRIL 1759.

HANDEL'S GRAVE-STONE  
IN POET'S CORNER, WESTMINSTER ABBEY.

THE  
THIRD GREAT TRIENNIAL  
HANDEL FESTIVAL  
AT THE  
CRYSTAL PALACE,  
JUNE, 1868.



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PROGRAMME OF ARRANGEMENTS.

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PUBLISHED AT 6, EXETER HALL, LONDON, W.C.,  
AND AT THE CRYSTAL PALACE, SYDENHAM, S.E.,  
WHERE IT MAY BE HAD ON APPLICATION PERSONALLY OR BY LETTER.

1868.



ATTENTION is directed to the announcement on the cover next to the title page of the proposed publication of the *fac-simile* of Handel's MS. of "The Messiah," permission for which has been graciously accorded by Her Majesty the Queen during the progress of this Programme through the press.

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NOTE.

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THE celebrated Portrait of Handel, by Denner, formerly in the possession of John Christopher Smith, as well as the Portrait of Joah Bates, the conductor of the 1784 commemoration of Handel—both the property of the Sacred Harmonic Society—have been loaned, for the present season, to the National Portrait Exhibition at South Kensington.

The marble Portrait Statue of Handel, by Roubiliac, may be seen at the rooms of the Sacred Harmonic Society, No. 6, Exeter Hall.

CRYSTAL PALACE.

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THE  
THIRD GREAT TRIENNIAL  
HANDEL FESTIVAL,  
JUNE, 1868.

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HANDEL! POETS sing his praises—DIVINES cite him as one of the most vivid exponents of Holy Writ—WARRIORS march to his defiant or triumphal strains—KINGS, QUEENS and PRINCES are christened and crowned, married and buried, to his ever-varying hymns, while MUSICIANS with one accord proclaim him THE MASTER OF MUSIC.

For nearly a century and a half, his notes, as familiar in royal palaces as in venerated cathedral piles, have had a cherished and abiding home in the lowly habitations of the stalwart sons of toil deep in the land of his adoption. In charity or in affliction—for the relief of the poor and needy—as a solace to the weary—in pomp or in festal joy, his strains have been—still are—welcome.

MOZART exclaimed—"Handel knows best what is capable of producing great effects." "When he chooses he strikes like a thunderbolt." HAYDN, towards the close of a long life, affirmed with deep emotion—"This man is the father of us all." While BEETHOVEN reverentially declared—"I would uncover my head and kneel at his

tomb." In our own time, MEYERBEER, hearing his "Israel in Egypt" for the first time at the Crystal Palace, in 1859, proclaimed its supremacy over everything within his vast musical experience, and MENDELSSOHN, who wrote—"I first became acquainted with Handel's works in 1835," in the short space of a dozen years afterwards spared of his busy life, yet found opportunity to write organ parts to his oratorios, and to edit "Israel in Egypt" for the Handel Society.

As if with a prescience of those colossal performances which Mendelssohn was destined never to witness, his father, writing to him on Handel, gives utterance to the following remarkable passage:—" *These new resources seem to me, like everything in this world, to have been developed at the right time.*"

Let these few striking words be taken as the cue for what is to follow; they will thus invite attention and bring success, to the Third Great Triennial Handel Festival, appointed to take place at the Crystal Palace in June, 1868.

It is no easy task to follow up the extraordinary results which have attended the four Festivals which have taken place, or triennially to offer a humble tribute of praise to Handel, after what has been said and written of him by so many minds of the highest order of intelligence and of practised habits of observation. If it were not for "new resources," all that could be said or done would be as a more than twice-told tale, void of public interest.

Firm and steadfast, however, in the belief that these "new resources"—developed as they have been—have not yet reached their climax; equally believing that by their continuous expansion Handel's supremacy as a musician may be still more firmly established; and with the full conviction that by these means thousands may yet be



introduced to enjoyments of the purest character, and may experience emotions of the most ennobling order, the task herein prescribed—at no time easy, on account of its responsibilities—is undertaken with less diffidence, from the recollection of the success which has followed previous efforts.

The Handel Festivals at the Crystal Palace have been repeatedly described as opening up new enjoyments in music. It has been remarked of "Israel in Egypt," that with a moderate-sized Orchestra, such as is provided at Exeter Hall or at a Birmingham Festival, the performance excites emotions which lead to the contemplation of the vastness of Handel's genius in compassing such a conception. At a Crystal Palace Handel Festival, however, it has been said, the imagination soars far beyond the composer and his work—the great Miracles of the Exodus standing out in such relief as to present themselves to the sense in the vivid grandeur of actual occurrence.

Who can have thus listened to the Hailstone Chorus without almost *seeing* the "FIRE, RAIN, HAIL" that "ran along upon the ground"? Who is there who has not felt his very hair stand on end, at that "Darkness which might be *felt*"? Who has not fancied a glimpse was opened to him of that Power above, as "HE spake the word," thundered out in unison by fifteen-hundred tenor and bass voices, rolled throughout the long-drawn nave and aisles of the Crystal Palace? Who has not found his heart's pulsations increase in joyful accord, as again and again "I will sing unto the Lord, for HE hath triumphed gloriously," has resounded from side to side, in that antiphonal majesty, which can only be realized by such music on such a scale, in such an Orchestra?

To write without enthusiasm on this subject would be

to manifest a callousness which can only belong to a few. As the *Times* remarked, such immense exhibitions are "beyond criticism." Not that criticism is not evoked, but words are weak to convey a description of the overwhelming emotions which take possession of the mind, when the great truths of Holy Writ are thus brought home to the imagination by the "new resources" which, "developed at the right time," are made subservient to these magnificent illustrations of Handel's immortal works.

If instances are sought of the effect of these "new resources" on that other great conception, "The Sacred Oratorio" "Messiah," they present themselves in a still more remarkable degree. Whether it be the "HALLELUJAH" ascending higher and higher in its majesty of expression; the bitter, biting sarcasm concentrated in "HE trusted in GOD," "let HIM deliver him"; the joyful conviction expressed in "I KNOW that my Redeemer liveth"; the heart-sick agony of "THY rebuke hath broken his heart," "Was ever sorrow like unto HIS sorrow?" or the jubilant "Lift up your heads," resounding from side to side of the colossal Orchestra, responded to by "Who is the King of Glory?" with its gladdening climax, "The LORD strong and mighty," "HE is the King of Glory";—in these and in hundreds of other instances, the power and grandeur thus brought into strong contrast with the most tender and pathetic expositions of Holy Writ, give to them a varied intensity and pathos of utterance and expression, of an entirely new character.

The "new resources" appeal at once to the imagination. Passages that have previously escaped notice now being made clear and vivid, so lead on to reverential awe that occasions like these present themselves to the mind in brightest relief for ever afterwards. Proof

of this exists in each one's personal experience. How often have the already familiar oratorio passages of Scripture, when again heard in public worship, or read in private, brought vividly to the recollection how appreciation of their high import has been heightened by our having listened to them on some such occasion as a Handel Festival! Years may have elapsed—the impression, however, remains: and familiar as these passages may be, often as they are presented to us, they are clothed with additional expression or sublimity by the great musical experiences we have previously enjoyed.

With this truth presented to us, is it not desirable that those who have not yet witnessed Handel thus majestically interpreted should, once in their lives at least, avail themselves of such an opportunity; should once seek emotions which shall at all times be a solace in weariness, a spring of gratitude in joy?

Nothing need be said to urge those who have enjoyed these privileges to avail themselves of them again. The steady persistent support given to the last Festival by many patrons of the 1857 and subsequent Festivals, proves clearly that the preceding description is not exaggerated, and that once in three years is not too frequent to renew those reminiscences, even were no further "new resources" available to heighten these triumphs of combined musical skill and organization. None are more ready to take advantage of the earliest opening of the Festival subscription books than the early patrons of these great Triennial Meetings. They look forward to the renewal of past gratification with increasing delight, and surer evidence that the sanguine anticipations of their founders were based upon good and safe premises cannot be found, than in the steady, continuous, and persistent support so spontaneously offered to them.

The four Festivals which have been held, have resulted in receipts of considerably more than one hundred thousand pounds. They have been attended by upwards of a quarter of a million of persons. These are facts of such astounding import as almost to bear upon their face an impress of extravagance even in these days of progress.

With no small gratification has it been noted, that these results have been attained without detriment to other important musical celebrations.

The success of the Handel Festivals has in no wise lessened the attractions of the Triennial Music Meetings held in various parts of the country. It was feared by some of the leading supporters of the country celebrations that they would be injured by what was regarded as competition. By the founders of the Handel Festivals, it was, however, distinctly predicted, that, in place of cause for alarm, the local Music Meetings, stimulated to increased exertion, would be invigorated and benefited by any success the Handel Festivals might attain. Such has been the result. The statistics of the three Meetings last held at Birmingham, Norwich, and Hereford show that each has resulted in larger receipts than at any period since the establishment of the Handel Festivals. Metropolitan example has given rise to provincial emulation, and has spurred up local patronage to an increased extent. The enormous mass of musical criticism evoked, and the publicity given to choral displays, by hundreds of country newspapers represented at the Handel Festivals, have not failed to exercise the most beneficial influence on all great local choral undertakings, which, noting the progress of musical art in the metropolis, kept pace with the requirements of their patrons in the provinces.

The points to which special attention may be directed as "new resources" for the coming Festival are to be found more in the improvement of details than in broad principles. For instance, no one would probably recommend that the Crystal Palace Festival Orchestra should be increased in extent. By carefully considered gradations, it has attained its present colossal magnitude (well described as occupying a space in width of double the diameter of the dome of Saint Paul's Cathedral\*) which fulfils every possible requirement. Experience has shown that the proper balance of power as applied to space has been attained.

To improve the intensity and clearness of that power, at the 1859 Festival a *velarium* was stretched over the entire Orchestra. At great cost in 1862 a wooden semi-circular ceiling was constructed to the Orchestra, extending nearly 40 feet in front thereof. This was a marked success, and rendered the Crystal Palace Orchestra the finest place in the world for displaying the powers of a great organ. It well repaid the outlay, large as it was. For the last Festival in 1865 considerable acoustical additions were also made; the sides of the great transept and the naves being partly filled up with a hard reverberating material. This proved conclusively that not only could the great desideratum of distinctness to the auditory, with less physical exertion on the part of the principal *soli artistes*, be attained, but increased clearness of point and answer in the choral fugues, was also evident to all who closely studied the question. So much more breadth of expression was also apparent in the more forcible choruses, and so much was added to the intensity of

\* The area occupied by the Handel Festival Orchestra is more than *sixteen thousand* feet. The orchestra of the late Antient Concerts at Hanover Square covered a space of only *nine hundred and forty-three* feet. It must at once be evident how much Handel's choruses have gained by this enormous increase.

feeling in the more plaintive movements, that it proved the right course had been pursued, and that it was only requisite to carry out these later improvements to their full extent, to place the Centre Transept in indisputable supremacy as the one locale for a Great Choral Festival. That it may be seen that the favourable opinions here enunciated are not put forward without due authority, the following extracts from several leading journals are appended:—

“The spectacle, through frequent repetition, has become familiar, although it is far too picturesque, splendid, and imposing ever to become hackneyed, or to fail in exciting sensations of wonder and delight. It is only necessary to note the marked improvement in the acoustical effect obtained by certain new contrivances, most prominent among which are the screens that, descending from the roof more than halfway to the base, virtually inclose the Central Transept on the north and south, and thus, in a measure never till now attained, prevent the sound travelling away from the space it is intended to fill.”—*Times*, 24th June, 1865.

“Where in the whole world could so fit a locale be found as the ‘airily delicate palace’ that shines on Sydenham Hill? Where else, indeed, are we to seek a concert-room that has an orchestra capable of receiving the entire population of many a famous city, and an *auditorium* in which all the inhabitants of a kingdom may find ‘ample space and verge enough’? And where else shall we look for a *salle* furnished to luxuriance with the noblest specimens of the sculptor’s art, and the rarest examples of the florist’s skill; the diaphanous walls of which, while they afford full protection from the bitter winds, and grateful shade from the burning sun, open up on every side lovely prospects to the spectator’s view? It would be strange indeed if performances organised under such direction were not efficient, and if, given under such circumstances, they did not prove attractive.”—*Daily Telegraph*.

“The result of the whole was to show that, from the great

improvements made in the Crystal Palace as a musical locality, from the increased efficiency of the choral voices caused by the admirable system of instruction and training now in use, and from the great powers of the distinguished artists engaged, the performances excel in grandeur and beauty anything that has ever been heard at the Crystal Palace."—*Daily News*.

"The vast area mellows both the voices and the band, so that while the audience is conscious of overwhelming power of sound, that sound is, if we may so speak, etherealised; it is the *spiritual* of music in chorus."—*Beehive*.

"Each Festival has been an improvement on its predecessor, both as regards the substantial acoustical arrangement, and also the decoration of the building. We may presume that 1868 will show other improvements, until no further improvement can be made."—*Manchester Examiner and Times*.

"The colossal size and singular beauty of the Crystal Palace, and its accommodation for an orchestra and an audience almost numberless, confer a magnificence upon the fêtes held within its walls that eclipses all others; a more important feature in the present Festival is the result of the bold and clever scheme of covering in the orchestra with a vaulted roof or sound-board, so constructed as to prevent the dispersion of sound anywhere but amongst the audience."—*The Builder*.

"It has been much improved. The screens, placed to shut in the Centre Transept from the Naves, have added greatly to the acoustic qualities of the building, and now it may be said that the Transept of the Crystal Palace, with the monster orchestra filling one end, is the most gigantic, and, at the same time, the airiest and most brilliant *locale* for music in the world."—*Dublin Evening Mail*.

What was wanting in the experiments of 1865, will now be carried out *to the fullest extent*; and as since that time considerable additional experience in the acoustical conditions of the Palace has been gained by the great Fête offered by command to His Imperial Majesty

the Sultan, last summer, no doubt is entertained—in fact it is specially promised to the patrons of the coming Festival—that greatly enhanced effects will result in June next.

From the better general organisation, and the improvement manifest in the component portions of the gigantic musical army employed at these Festivals, great advantages must also flow from the past three years' practice and experience.

The Sacred Harmonic Society—the nucleus of the Festival Orchestra—has more than maintained its own. At no period have its performances been more crowded—has testimony in its favour been more unanimous, than during the three years just concluded. So also with the local musical meetings. At Birmingham it has been especially remarked, with what strides choral ability has advanced. The list of difficult music performed at the Birmingham Meeting last September, with unvarying success, was unexampled for length and variety. It is therefore clear, that from the metropolis, as well as from the provinces, progress will be exhibited in an unusual degree at the coming Festival.

Admission to the great choral rehearsals at Exeter Hall is more than ever sought after by amateurs of ability. Hundreds of applicants for entry into this great choir of sixteen hundred voices, forming the Metropolitan Amateur Choral Contingent, are now enrolled in the registers at Exeter Hall. Bearing in mind the claims of the provincial choral societies, it is not thought advisable to enlarge the choir from London resources, additionally abundant as they are. It must, however, be readily observed, how much the effectiveness of the general force both from London and the provinces can be increased, when the applicants to take part in the Handel Festival are so numerically enlarged,



that a much higher standard of excellence may be insisted upon as the qualification for admission to the Orchestra. Let it be clearly understood—none are admitted without careful preliminary trial—none are retained unless they show, by punctual attendance and close attention, that they regard association with the Handel Festivals as a privilege worthy of attainment.

It must never be lost sight of, that it is only from the fact of a very large proportion of the performers rendering their valuable services in an amateur spirit that a colossal Festival like the present can be undertaken. Large as the receipts are, if all the performers required payment for their assistance, it could not be made remunerative. As it is the outlay is so vast, the preparations are so extensive, that only the greatest activity renders it successful. On the other hand, it may be remarked, that unlike other musical associations, no payment of subscription qualifies amateurs for admission, either to the Sacred Harmonic Society, or to the Festival Choir. Ability, regularity, and assiduity, are the tests applied. It is not from any love of dictatorial regulation that these conditions are regarded as so essential, but in the full belief that a monster Orchestra like that of the Festivals can only be brought to perfection by individual effort and rigid discipline. An Orchestra of four thousand performers, wanting this discipline, would be like an army without drill or organisation, and for these reasons these points are again and again put prominently forward. It is a pleasure to know that the most cheerful compliance is always accorded to regulations laid down, by amateurs as readily as by professors; it is equally gratifying to feel that, aided by other favouring circumstances, compliance with them produces the grandest orchestral results the world has ever witnessed.

It is not the Chorus alone which will manifest improve-

ment. The Band will more than maintain the high position accorded to it. It should be so. A far greater number of talented instrumentalists are resident in London than in any other capital city. The best orchestral players of every country flock to England. More good, more varied orchestral music is heard in this metropolis than in any other part of the world. Such orchestras as are brought together for the two opera-houses and other theatres, at the Sacred Harmonic Society and other choral institutions, the Crystal Palace orchestra—unique of its kind—the two Philharmonic Societies, &c., and the many talented instrumentalists more immediately engaged in private tuition, present an aggregate of professional instrumental ability without parallel, and except for which a Handel Festival, such as we are accustomed to listen to, would be utterly impossible. To these have to be added the numerous good orchestral performers throughout the provinces: for instance, those engaged at Mr. Charles Hallé's deservedly popular concerts at Manchester, others at Liverpool, Birmingham, Leeds, Edinburgh, Glasgow, Dublin, &c.

When these are supplemented by the aid of amateurs of high social position and acknowledged musical ability such as are enrolled in the Society of Wandering Minstrels, to name whom individually would here be out of place, with other amateur instrumentalists of well-known excellence, it shows what an array of talent is available in England. Numerically extensive as the instrumental force employed at the Handel Festivals is—two hundred and fifty music desks being mostly occupied by four hundred stringed instrument performers, of whom nearly one hundred and fifty are players upon violoncellos and double basses—it must be evident, from the vastness of the undertaking, that, as the managing body gains experience by continuous organization, each triennial cele-

bration, with increasing individual ability, must produce results far in advance of those which have preceded them.

Let it be steadily borne in mind that the first prospectus of the preliminary Handel Festival, issued in November, 1856, especially declared that the commemoration of Handel was not the only object sought, but through it, throwing down the gauntlet to the whole civilised world, to afford an efficient and continuous illustration "of the extent to which musical knowledge and practice have advanced in England."

Upon this preliminary Festival the *Times* newspaper remarked:—

"The evidence thus afforded of the great advance in the cultivation of music which has been made in this country is most gratifying." . . . "Now a century after the death of Handel it has been found possible to assemble together this vast orchestra, to perform the grandest music which has ever been written in a way which was impossible when the composer lived, if not inconceivable." "The difference between England now and England then is vast indeed."

The high aim thus in view has not for one instant been lost sight of. Increased success has brought with it increased responsibility involving no slight additional watchfulness and exertion. These additional duties, however, are cheerfully undertaken, further demands being met by "new resources." Again, to quote the remark made to Mendelssohn, "their development occurs at the right time." It would be tantamount to the abdication of the high musical position attained by the Handel Festivals wilfully to neglect a single point to render the Festival of 1868 a still more marked display of every "new resource" which can illustrate ENGLAND'S CONTINUED MUSICAL PROGRESS.

Most fortunately for this continued progress, for the Festival and for those who enjoy the privilege of witnessing it, it will again have in Mr. Costa, a chief as worthy to illustrate Handel, as to exhibit the progress Music has made and continues to make in England. After nearly a lifetime spent in rendering England supreme as regards executive music, he happily abides with us still further to develop the great aim of his laborious life. Respected by all for the great results he has accomplished, it is not without well-founded anticipations in the future—that he will still accomplish other great results for musical progress in England. The “new resources” brought to bear on Handel will not be at an end so long as the baton of office is wielded by the powerful determination of Mr. Costa. As illustrating the theory put forward a few pages back that England is the abiding home of the labours of great musicians, we see in the case of Handel and Costa many striking similarities—Long may the combination exist for the continual advancement of one of the loftiest aims of Musical Art.

These few brief remarks on the advantages the Handel Festival enjoys from its association with Mr. Costa are supplemented by the following extract from Mr. Ella's “Record of the Musical Union” :—

“Whatever can be accomplished to satisfy the connoisseur, in the organization, discipline, and control of the musical forces assembled at this Festival, in the proper balance of voices and instruments, judicious use of the monster organ, important distribution of brass instruments to assist accent, the precision of *tempi*, and intelligible motion of the baton, the one directing mind of Costa will not fail to achieve. To his experience, intelligence, art-love, and integrity, music in this country is largely indebted. Our great bands are no longer ill-appointed, ill-disciplined, in-

efficient, and subject to the criticisms of our continental brethren. *Il a changé tout cela*, and has reorganized and brought into a state of perfect discipline the most important musical institutions in this country. Irrespective of all other considerations, we have never known Costa to neglect the claims of the most competent artist to fulfil any vacant place in his band; more especially an Englishman worthy of the appointment.

"This is the secret of his deserved popularity. Quick, impulsive, discerning, and punctual in his engagements, it is marvellous what he is able to accomplish in a single rehearsal. He is, too, a naturalised Englishman, proud of the position he has won for himself in this country, and in every sense one of us, of whom we are justly proud. He has never meanly stooped to court the opinions of critics, but like all men in public places of trust and influence, he has had to fight his battles with bitter enemies of the press.

"Of Costa, therefore, it may truly be said, '*Quisque suæ fortunæ faber est.*' To such a man and musician is justly confided the direction of this great Festival. We have never known a musician so well trained to the exigencies of his position, and one better endowed with the faculties to maintain it with honour and credit.

'Celsa sedet Æolus arce

Sceptra tenens, mollitque animos, et temperat ira.'

"Reputation inspires confidence, and we feel sure this great Festival—this national homage to the genius of one, also of foreign birth, who acquired on British soil an immortal name—will be conducted with zeal and untiring energy by the composer of '*Eli*' and '*Naaman*'—Costa."

There is little more to add to this programme than a statement of the works to be performed, the prices of tickets and the particulars of issue, together with a reference to the arrangements for the comfort of the vast audiences which will again be assembled at the Crystal Palace in June, 1868.

As regards the first of these points—the works to be

performed—it has been stated that considerable variety in selection would be incompatible with the principles upon which these Festivals were projected. The Sacred Harmonic Society was instituted to give to the public the *best* representations of the *best* choral sacred works, irrespective of school or country. The objects of the Handel Festivals, equally clearly defined, have been so repeatedly explained that no further reference to them here is needed. Suffice it to say that in two out of the three days, these objects cannot be better promoted than by the performance of the "MESSIAH" on the FIRST DAY (MONDAY), and "ISRAEL IN EGYPT" on the THIRD and LAST DAY (FRIDAY).

Fortunately, public feeling coincides with this. Once in three years the public—the vast paying HANDEL FESTIVAL PUBLIC—looks forward with increasing pleasurable anticipations to these colossal interpretations of the cherished master works of the master mind of Music. Public appetite to witness the Christmas and Lent performances of the "Messiah", by the Sacred Harmonic Society at Exeter Hall is now far stronger than at any time during the thirty years during which this Oratorio has been performed. So it is triennially with the "Messiah" and "Israel in Egypt" at the Crystal Palace. Nor is it to be wondered at. No great choral works gain so much in public estimation by frequent hearing and by additional magnificence of orchestral execution, as these two oratorios. They bear any extension. Too much force and expression cannot be applied to them, and every "new resource," whether developed by means of increased orchestral extent, the employment of greater individual ability, or by better acoustical conditions, tells most favourably on the well-known favourite solos and choruses, and serves to bring

into prominent notice other movements and passages, which, in a moderate orchestra, are passed by with little comment.

Irrespective of this, these two Oratorios represent distinct phases of feeling. A grand performance of the "Messiah" by thousands of thoughtful and intelligent auditors is looked upon as a lofty religious exercise of the mind, to be often indulged in and to be treasured in recollection at all times and seasons.

"Israel in Egypt" appeals more directly and forcibly to the sense by its vivid word-painting of the plagues of Egypt, as well as by those massive antiphonal musical difficulties, which, only surmounted by colossal organisation made efficient by devoted practice, renders "Israel in Egypt" an appropriate climax to any Festival, whatever other Oratorio may have preceded it.

"Messiah" leads the way to that consummation of Orchestral achievement—a Handel Festival Exhibition of "Israel in Egypt."

As regards "Israel in Egypt," it may be noted that the Prince Consort was a steady patron of this great work, as evinced by His Royal Highness's attendance at performances of it by the Sacred Harmonic Society, as well as at the two Handel Festivals in 1857 and 1859.

It is worth noting that the real popularity of "Israel in Egypt" as a complete work, although composed in 1738, dates from less than a quarter of a century back. It is true a version of it was performed at the Westminster Abbey Festival in 1834, conducted by the late Sir George Smart, but it was so altered by interpolation and excision (for instance, the great tenor song—"The enemy said," since made so peculiarly his own by Mr. Sims Reeves at the Handel Festivals, was one of the omissions), that Handel's own sequence in the oratorio was de-

stroyed. It is true that Handel himself, in the vain endeavour to conciliate his patrons, was constrained to take a somewhat similar course, but it was without effect. The master-work was in advance of the age. The "new resources" required to develop its mighty power were not in existence. It will long remain a feature in the history of the Sacred Harmonic Society, and will occupy a still brighter page in the records of the Handel Festivals, that through their instrumentality, "Israel in Egypt," AS HANDEL CONCEIVED IT AND PENNED IT, that master-work which one month sufficed to see noted down in his own MS., now in Her Majesty's Library, has at length attained a popularity and a power, which, as a great musical triumph, impossible to have been foreseen or conceived by the composer, reflects the greatest credit upon the solid musical taste of the English people, and offers an example which is being followed to the ends of the earth.

The intermediate day of the three days—WEDNESDAY—will, as heretofore, be occupied by a selection. Not that there are not oratorios enough of Handel, which might be selected for the second day—for instance, "Samson," "Judas Maccabeus," "Saul," "Solomon," &c.; or that among his secular works, "Acis and Galatea," "Alexander's Feast," &c., and others of a similar class, would not worthily occupy one whole (or nearly entire) day of a Handel Festival. It is, however, thought better—although not desiring to push the example of selections beyond certain limits—on an occasion occurring at intervals of three years, to devote one day to a performance which exhibits the composer in his most varied effects, and selecting from his numerous other works such pieces as best display the grandest effects of the Orchestra,



likewise introduce others which specially afford scope for the exercise of the eminent talents of the distinguished *soli* vocalists retained for the occasion. Thus some detached pieces of Handel are brought forward, which, not having enjoyed the same opportunities for becoming public favourites as those better known—because oftener heard—movements of the “Messiah” and “Israel,” equally deserve favourable recognition.

Before particularizing the prices of Tickets, it may be as well to state, that, taking advantage of the acoustical experience gained by the arrangements made last year at the Musical Fête offered to the Sultan, the great stage will not be removed, but, as in June last, will be converted into appropriate private boxes with adequate withdrawal rooms for the Royal and distinguished visitors whose presence is anticipated on this occasion. This will considerably limit the number of Central Stalls, but all issued will be more uniformly good. It was found in June last, that the stage thus fitted up acted as an excellent reverberatory *vis-à-vis* to the Festival Orchestra; it is certain, therefore, that great benefit, in an acoustical point of view, will result to the holders of tickets which secure Stalls in central blocks.

This will be further increased by the formation of a wide avenue up the centre, extending from the Conductor's seat to the Private Boxes, dividing the blocks of double letters from those of single letters, an alteration also introduced with advantage at the Sultan's Fête. All seats will, however, face the Orchestra. Despite the number of Stalls thus sacrificed, this new arrangement is adopted from the additional facilities it will afford to the numerous staff of Honorary Stewards, who so kindly and ably attend to the important duty of seating the visitors. It has been a source of much gratification that the vast audiences

General Post-office, St. Martin's-le-Grand, London. The delivery of tickets in exchange for vouchers will commence on Monday, the 20th of April, at the Crystal Palace and Exeter Hall. The right is reserved to give preference to applications for sets of tickets for the three days' performances.

By order,

ROBERT K. BOWLEY,

*General Manager.*

CRYSTAL PALACE,

March 2nd, 1868.

*NOTE.—Persons preferring seats in any particular block are recommended to apply for them as early as possible after the opening of the Subscription Books at 10 a.m. on the 9th of March. Even the Crystal Palace, with its vast space, has limits of accommodation which cannot be exceeded; and the demand at each of the four previous Festivals for seats in particular blocks having been greatly in excess of any possible supply, the necessity for the foregoing intimation must be apparent, the more so from the limitation of the number of seats consequent upon the retention of the great stage in the Centre Transept.*

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